



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE TEAMS UP WITH STATE AND LOCALS TO ARREST DOCTOR FOR POSSESSING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

-Physician employed at the Family Doctors Clinic in Harvey-

LULING, La. — A 45-year-old doctor charged with child pornography was arrested here Jan. 13 by special agents of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Louisiana Attorney General's Office and deputies of the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office.

Dr. David Sampognaro, a physician employed at the Family Doctors Clinic in Harvey, La., was arrested following a joint law enforcement investigation. ICE special agents executed a search warrant at his residence in Jan. 2004. During the search, several items were seized, including Dr. Sampognaro's home computer, related storage media and documents. A subsequent forensic analysis revealed that Dr. Sampognaro had images of child pornography stored in his computer. During two separate interviews with authorities, Dr. Sampognaro discussed his child pornography activities.

Dr. Sampognaro was arrested on a state-issued arrest warrant.

"Child pornography data stored on computers ultimately leads us to find and arrest predators who harm children," said Michael A. Holt, special agent-in-charge of ICE in New Orleans. "ICE will continue to work with State's Attorneys General and local sheriff's offices and police departments to hold accountable those who prey on the most vulnerable in our society."

The case and evidence has been presented for prosecution to the District Attorney for the 29th Judicial District, Harry Morel Jr.

This arrest is part of ICE's Operation Predator, a comprehensive national initiative to protect children. Operation Predator targets human traffickers, international sex tourists, Internet pornographers and foreign national predators whose crimes make them deportable. Since Operation Predator was launched in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 6,800 individuals nationwide, and deported more than 2,100 foreign nationals. To date, 26 arrests have been made under Operation Predator in Louisiana.

Additional information about Operation Predator is available on the web at www.ice.gov. ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. Investigators staff this hotline around the clock.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.